the scheme. Central Government has now launched a new non-plan scheme from the current financial year for construction of additional jails to reduce overcrowiding, repair and renovation of existing jails, improvement in sanitation and water supply and living accommodation for prison staff to be implemented over a period of five years with an outlay of Rs. 1800 crore on cost sharing basis in the ratio of 75:25 by the Central Government and the State Governments respectively. The tentative allocation under this scheme for Orissa for the next five years is Rs. 107.40 crore including the State share.

Over crowding in Jails

#*28. SHRI B.J. PANDA:†
SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the reports captioned, "Indian jails overcrowded with 67,000 prisoners-UP jails worse with over 29,000 inmates, Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Manipur prisons have space" as reported in the Asian Age, dated the 18th December, 2002;

(b) if so, the facual position about over-crowding in different jails and whether National Human Rights Commission has expressed concern over this; and

(c) the position with regard to over-crowding in jails in Orissa with steps to reduce this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Government is aware of the report captioned, "Indian jails overcrowded with over 67,000 prisoners" published in the New Delhi edition of The Asian Age dated 19th December, 2002.

#Question No. 21 and 28 were taken together.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ramachandra Khuntia.

(b) Against the capacity of 2,21,937, there were 2,89,013 inmates in various jails in the country as on 31.12.2001. The authorized capacity and inmate population in jails in specified States as on 31.12.2001 were as under:—

State	Authorised Capacity	Inmates Population
Jammu and Kashmir	2705	1307
Manipur	1150	366
Orissa	7532	11675
Tamil Nadu	19240	7200
Uttar Pradesh	32380	61651

The National Human Rights Commission has expressed concern on the conditions of prisons and prisoners from time to time.

(c) The Government of Orissa has been alive to the needs of Prison Reforms which is a continuous process. They have been constructing additional prison wards to reduce the over crowding and improve hygiene and sanitation in prisons in a phased manner. In order to supplement the efforts of the State Government, the Central Government has been providing financial assistance to them under the Scheme of the Modernization of Prison Administration. During 1993-94 to 2001-2002 the Government of Orissa was provided with an amount of Rs. 233.78 lakhs under the scheme. The Central Government has now launched a new non-plan scheme from the current financial year for this purpose. An amount of Rs. 107.40 crore including 25% State contribution is the proposed expenditure for Orissa, for the next five years under the scheme of Modernisation of Prisons.

SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Sir, as has been stated by the hon. Minister, the Orissa Government was given Rs. 233.78 lakhs between 1993-94 and 2001-02, whereas in Orissa, the total jail capacity is 7,532 and the prisoners' population is 11,675. Now, the question is whether that amount is sufficient for alteration or addition of the jails, which is required to be done by the Orissa Government. Now the Government proposes to give Rs. 107.40 crores. So, I want to know whether the Orissa Government has given any action plan as to how much money they ask for, to which

the Central Government agreed. What will happen if the Orissa Government is not able to give its share? If it is not able to give its share, then how this money could be utilised?

SHRI I.D. SWAMI: So far as the present Five-year Plan is concerned, it is for the whole country and, of course, for Orissa also, the amount has been already earmarked and they have made provisions. They have sent an action plan for increasing the number of wards in some of the jails, by taking up central jails first, and then upgrading sub-jails to district jails and making provision for new wards in all the sub-jails and also in district jails. The Action Plan has been put up by them, and according to that Plan, we have sanctioned the amount, and that amount would be given every year, as per the Five-year Plan. In addition to that, the Tenth Finance Commission and the Eleventh Finance Commission had also recommended certain amount for jail reforms and that has also been given to the States.

SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Sir, it has been reported that in the whole country, the jail capacity is 2,21,937, whereas the inmates' population is 2,89,013. Out of them 2,16,709 are under-trials and 72,304 are convicts. I would like to know as to how much time it will take to finish the trial, and whether this number of under-trials also includes children. I also want to know whether the fast track courts which have been set up by the Government could be able to decide these cases so that the number of under-trials is reduced.

SHRI I. D. SWAMI: Sir, there is no doubt that 75 per cent of the inmates in the jails are under-trails, and, for that, the Central Government, on its own, has been writing to the State Governments to form committees in which the officers of the prisons, officers of the district administration and officers of the district judiciary are involved, so that they can pay more frequent visits to the jails and dispose of certain cases. This has been done by some of the States. And there is no doubt about it. In addition to that, so far as the question regarding reduction in number of under-trials is concerned, I would like to say that the directions or advisories have been sent to the State Governments. As the subject of prison reforms is that of the State Government, we have written to them that so far as the minor offences are concerned, the courts may be held in the prison premises, and those cases may be disposed of there itself. Sir, two Committees, namely, the Mullah Committee and the Kapur Committee were constituted on this subject. Those Committees had also recommended

certain things which have also been circulated to the State Governments for implementation.

SHRI B. J. PANDA: Sir, the statement furnished by the hon. Minister in respect of Question No. 21 and 28 very substantially answers the questions that I had raised. I would just like to express my satisfaction for Rs. 107 crores earmarked for Orissa; and I have no further supplementary.

Dialogue with Elected Representatives to Resolve Kashmir Issue

*22. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government is of the view that there is need for a dialogue with the elected representatives and the separatist groups to resolve the Kashmir issue;

(b) if so, whether any steps have been taken or being taken in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, INCHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) to (c) The Prime Minister in his address to the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort on August 15,2002 had announced the resolve of the present Government at the Centre to initiate a dialogue with the elected representatives and other organizations in the State. Besides, as a matter of policy the Government continues to keep its doors open for talks with any groups or sections within J and K who eschew the path of violence.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman has kindly allowed me to put this Question in the unavoidable absence of Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad. Sir, I am grateful to you for the courtesy in allowing me to put this question in the unavoidable absence of Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Sir, Jammu and Kashmir has had a troubled history since 1947; I do not have to repeat that. The last 13 years of aggressive militancy have been full of disaster, destruction and death. Sir, the elections in September-October, 2002 provided a new window of opportunity. The Prime Minister made a commitment from the ramparts of the Red Fort, which the hon. Minister has mentioned, that they would initiate dialogue with the elected representatives of the people and other organisations. Four-and-a-half months have elapsed since those elections but there seems to be no move yet, as far as we are aware, of initiating this important set of dialogue.